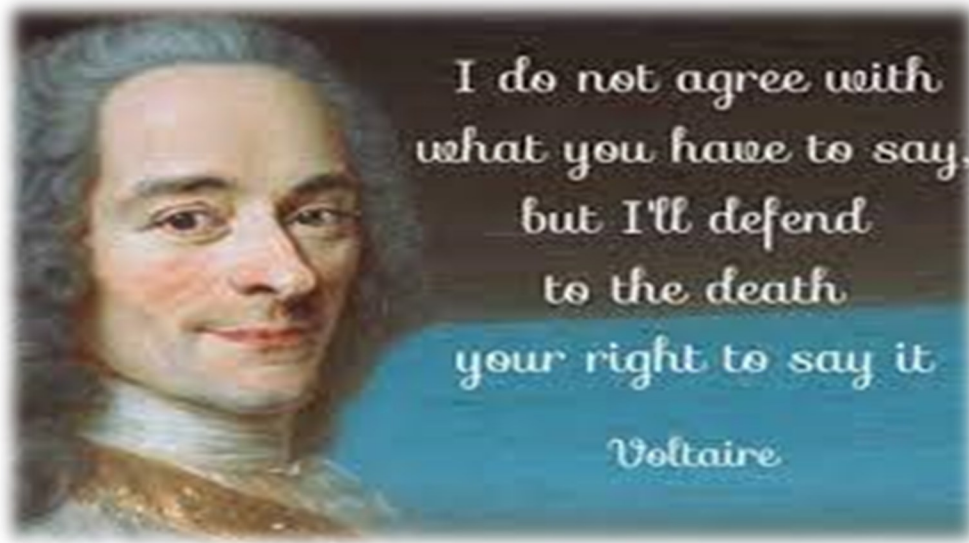


108
Greatest Of All Times



**Globally selected
Personalities**



21 Nov 1694 <::><::><::> 30 May 1778

ISBN:978-81-981806-0-5

Compiled by:
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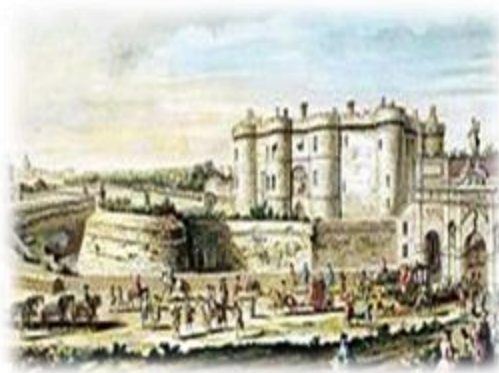
Voltaire



Portrait c. 1720s, the [Musée Carnavalet](#)

Born	François-Marie Arouet 21 November 1694 Paris , Kingdom of France
Died	30 May 1778 (aged 83) Paris , Kingdom of France
Resting place	Panthéon , Paris
Occupation	Writer, philosopher, historian
Language	French
Education	Collège Louis-le-Grand
Genres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fiction (novella• short story• tragedy• poetry)• Non-fiction (polemic• treatise• essay• article• historiography• literary criticism• epistle• correspondence)
Subjects	Religious intolerance, freedom

Literary movement	Classicism
Years active	From 1715
Notable works	Candide The Maid of Orleans The Age of Louis XIV
Partner	Émilie du Châtelet (1733–1749) Marie Louise Mignot (1744–1778)
Philosophy career	
Era	Age of Enlightenment
Region	Western philosophy French philosophy
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lumières • Philosophes • Deism • Classical liberalism
Main interests	Political philosophy , literature , historiography , biblical criticism
Notable ideas	Philosophy of history , ^[1] freedom of religion , freedom of speech , separation of church and state
	Signature 



Voltaire was imprisoned in the Bastille from 16 May 1717 to 15 April 1718 in a windowless cell with ten-foot-thick walls.



Voltaire's *château* at Ferney, France



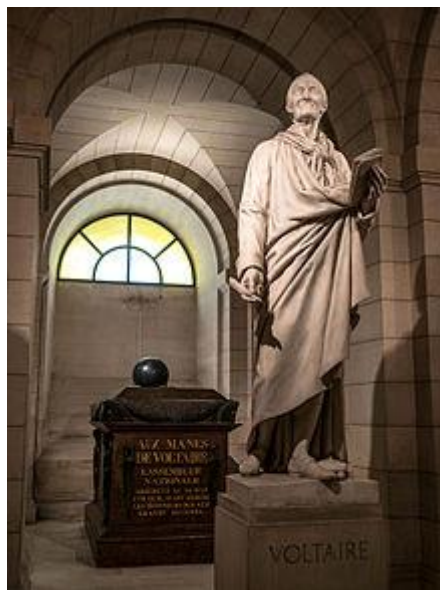
In the frontispiece to Voltaire's book on Newton's philosophy, Émilie du Châtelet appears as Voltaire's muse, reflecting Newton's heavenly insights down to Voltaire.



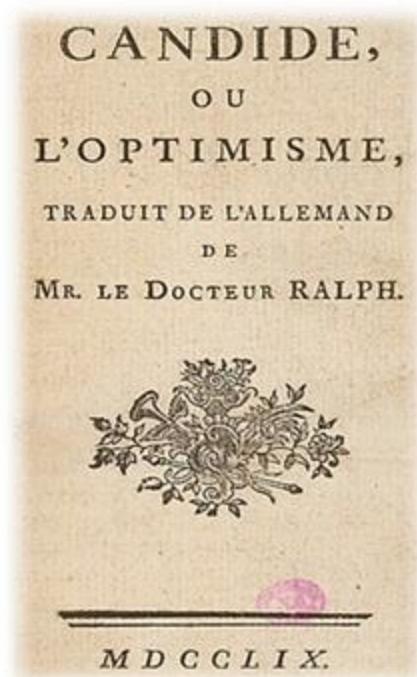
Die Tafelrunde by Adolph von Menzel: guests of Frederick the Great at Sanssouci, including members of the Prussian Academy of Sciences and Voltaire (third from left)



House in Paris where Voltaire died



Voltaire's tomb in the Paris Panthéon



Title page of Voltaire's *Candide*, 1759



Voltaire at 70; engraving from 1843
edition of his *Philosophical Dictionary*



Portrait of Voltaire in the
Palace of Versailles, 1724-1725

François-Marie Arouet (French: [fʁɑ̃swa maʁi aʁwɛ]; 21 November 1694 - 30 May 1778), known by his nom de plume **M. de Voltaire** (/vɒlˈteər, voʊl-/; US also /vɔːl-/; French: [vɔltɛʁ]), was a French Enlightenment writer, philosopher (*philosophe*), satirist, and historian. Famous for his wit and his criticism of Christianity (especially of the Roman Catholic Church) and of slavery, Voltaire was an advocate of freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and separation of church and state.

Voltaire was a versatile and prolific writer, producing works in almost every literary form, including plays, poems, novels, essays, histories, and even scientific expositions. He wrote more than 20,000 letters and 2,000 books and pamphlets. Voltaire was one of the first authors to become renowned and commercially successful internationally. He was an outspoken advocate of civil liberties and was at constant risk from the strict censorship laws of the Catholic French monarchy. His polemics witheringly satirized intolerance and religious

dogma, as well as the French institutions of his day. His best-known work and magnum opus, Candide, is a novella that comments on, criticizes, and ridicules many events, thinkers and philosophies of his time, most notably Gottfried Leibniz and his belief that our world is of necessity the "best of all possible worlds".

{<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voltaire>}

(☺)(☺)@@@@@@@@@@@@@@ (☺)(☺)

Brief Profile

VOLTAIRE

<https://www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk/about-voltaire/>

François-Marie Arouet (1694-1778), known as Voltaire, was a writer, philosopher, poet, dramatist, historian and polemicist of the French Enlightenment. The diversity of his literary output is rivalled only by its abundance: the critical edition of his complete works begun in 1968 and finished in 2022 comprises 205 hardback volumes.

'The age of Voltaire' has become synonymous with 'the Enlightenment', but although Voltaire's eminence as a *philosophe* is self-evident, the precise originality of his thought and writings is less easily defined.

His life

Born in Paris into a wealthy bourgeois family, he was a brilliant pupil of the Jesuits. His rejection of his father's attempts to guide him into a career in the law was sealed in 1718, when he invented a new name for himself: 'de Voltaire'. Voltaire is an anagram of 'Arouet l(e) j(eune)' (in the 18th century, *i* and *j*, and *u* and *v*, were typographically interchangeable). The addition of the aristocratic preposition 'de' may be an early sign of his social ambition, but the play on the verb *volter*, to turn abruptly, evokes a playful or 'volatile' quality which foretells the quick style, pervasive humour and irony that make Voltaire such an important figure in the history of the Enlightenment.

In the same year that he coined his new name, Voltaire enjoyed his first major literary success when his tragedy *Œdipe* was staged by the Comédie Française.

Meanwhile he was working on an epic poem which had as its protagonist Henri IV, the much-loved French monarch who brought France's civil wars to a close, and who, in Voltaire's treatment, becomes a forerunner of religious toleration: *La Ligue* (later enlarged to become *La Henriade*) was first published in 1723.

Voltaire in England

His reputation as a poet and dramatist was now comfortably established, and he decided to travel to England to oversee the publishing of the definitive edition of *La Henriade*. His departure for London was precipitated when he unwisely became involved in a humiliating argument with an aristocrat, who had him briefly interned in the Bastille.

Voltaire arrived in London in the autumn of 1726, and what had begun partly as self-imposed exile became a crucially formative period for him. He learned English and mixed with a number of figures prominent in England's political and cultural life. An old saw has it that Voltaire 'came to England a poet and left it a philosopher'. In truth, he was a philosopher before coming to England, and it would be more accurate to say that Voltaire came to England a poet and left it a prose writer. Voltaire thought of himself first and foremost as a poet, and during his long life he would never abandon the writing of verse, for which he had a remarkable facility (many of his letters are sprinkled with seemingly spontaneous passages of verse). In England, however, he came into contact with models of prose unlike those to which he was accustomed in France: Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, for example, which Voltaire read on first publication, or Addison's *Spectator*, a periodical he used in order to learn to read English. It is hardly coincidental, therefore, that before returning to France in 1728, Voltaire began writing his first two major essays in prose: a history, the *Histoire de Charles XII*, and a book about the English, which is now best known under the title *Lettres philosophiques*, but was first published in English translation (London 1733) as the *Letters Concerning the English Nation*.

Cirey and Berlin

The furore created by the publication in France in 1734 of the *Lettres philosophiques* led Voltaire to leave Paris and take refuge in the château of his mistress, Mme du Châtelet, at Cirey-en-Champagne. From 1734 until Mme du Châtelet's death in 1749, this was his haven from the world. During this period, he studied and wrote intensively in a wide variety of areas, including science (*Eléments de la philosophie de Newton*, 1738), poetry (*Le Mondain*, 1736), drama (*Mahomet*, 1741), and fiction (*Zadig*, 1747). In the 1740s, Voltaire was briefly on better terms with the court: he was made royal historiographer in 1745, and the following year, after several failed attempts, he was finally elected to the Académie Française. He had turned fifty and was now the leading poet and dramatist of his day; perhaps even Voltaire did not imagine that the works which would make him even more celebrated still lay in the future.

An initially idyllic interlude was provided by Voltaire's stay at the court of Potsdam (1750-1753), and in 1752 he published both *Le Siècle de Louis XIV* and *Micromégas*. Throughout his career, however, Voltaire was prone to involvement in literary quarrels, and his time in Berlin was no exception; his attack on Pierre-Louis de Maupertuis, president of the Berlin Academy, caused Frederick II to lose patience with him. Voltaire left Berlin in a flurry of mutual recriminations, and although these were later forgotten, Voltaire's dream of having found the ideal enlightened monarch were definitively shattered. His correspondence with Frederick, which had begun in 1736 when the latter was still crown prince, survived, and, after a hiatus, it continued until Voltaire's death. They corresponded on literary and philosophical matters, and Voltaire sent Frederick many of his works in manuscript. Their exchange of more than seven hundred letters remains as an extraordinary literary achievement in its own right.

Geneva and Ferney

In January 1755, after a period of wandering, Voltaire acquired a property in Geneva which he called 'Les Délices'. A new and more settled phase now began as, at the age of sixty-one, he became master of his own house for the first time: in a letter of March that year, he wrote that 'I am finally leading the life of a patriarch'. The Lisbon earthquake of November 1755 may have disturbed his philosophical certainties and caused him to doubt the Leibnizian Optimism which Alexander Pope had helped to popularize, but it did not disturb his new-found personal happiness. His *Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne* appeared within weeks of the earthquake, and it is revealing that his instant literary response should have been in verse. His prose response to the catastrophe, in *Candide*, took longer to mature and was published in 1759. In the meantime, he had written articles for the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d'Alembert, and in 1756 he published his universal history, the *Essai sur les mœurs*.

In 1757, d'Alembert's critical article 'Genève' in the *Encyclopédie* had provoked a scandal in that city. Geneva turned out not to be the model republic that Voltaire had imagined or hoped it was, and after a number of tussles with clerical authority, he resolved to leave the city. A return to Paris would not have been welcomed by the government, so he purchased a house and estate at Ferney, where he installed himself in 1760 - on French soil now, but within striking distance of the border. It was in this symbolically marginal position that Voltaire was to live for the rest of his life. Henceforth he would play the part of the *seigneur*, caring for his estate and even building a church for the villagers: it bears the deist (and immodest) inscription *Deo erexit Voltaire* ('Voltaire erected [this] to God'). But this new-found role did not mean that, like *Candide*, Voltaire had found happiness in cultivating his garden and in ignoring the world beyond. On the contrary, it was in 1760 that Voltaire first issued the rallying cry with which he would henceforth sign many of his letters: *Ecrasons l'Infâme* ('Let's crush the despicable'). The stability of his base at Ferney seems to have given Voltaire the opportunity over the following years to

launch and encourage the campaigns which soon made him the most famous writer in Europe.

The Calas affair was a defining moment in this crusade for tolerance. The Huguenot Jean Calas was tortured and broken on the wheel in 1762 after being found guilty, on the basis of dubious evidence, of murdering his son. Voltaire successfully led a determined campaign to clear Calas's name, writing many letters and publishing a number of works, including *Traité sur la tolérance* (1763). Other campaigns followed - a successful one to obtain the rehabilitation of another Huguenot family, the Sirvens, accused of having murdered a daughter recently converted to Catholicism, and an unsuccessful one to achieve a pardon for a nineteen-year-old man, La Barre, condemned to be burned at the stake for having committed certain trivial acts of sacrilege (and for having in his possession a copy of Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique*). These struggles brought Voltaire to even greater public prominence, and it in no way diminishes his undoubted determination and courage to say that he obviously relished his new role: in a letter of 1766, he wrote to a friend 'Oh how I love this philosophy of action and goodwill'.

Although many of Voltaire's later writings concerned his crusade for tolerance and justice, he continued, to write in a wide variety of forms, from tragedy to biblical criticism, and from satire to short fiction (*L'Ingénu*, 1767; *Le Taureau blanc*, 1773). In February 1778, Voltaire was persuaded by his friends to make a symbolic return to Paris, ostensibly to oversee preparations to stage his latest tragedy, *Irène*. It was the first time he had set foot in the capital since 1750, and he was received in triumph. A succession of friends called on him, and despite his deteriorating health, he attended a performance of his new play at the Comédie Française, in the course of which his bust was crowned on stage with a laurel wreath. His health did not permit his return to Ferney, and he died in Paris two months later. Even in death, Voltaire, a celebrated amateur actor, seemed to have stage-managed his departure from the scene so as to gain maximum publicity.

Voltaire and Enlightenment

In terms of the history of ideas, Voltaire's single most important achievement was to have helped in the 1730s to introduce the thought of Newton and Locke to France (and so to the rest of the Continent). This achievement is, as Jonathan Israel has shown, hardly as radical as has sometimes been thought: the English thinkers in question served essentially as a deistic bulwark against the more radical (atheistic) currents of thought in the Spinozist tradition. Voltaire's deist beliefs, reiterated throughout his life, came to appear increasingly outmoded and defensive as he grew older and as he became more and more exercised by the spread of atheism. Voltaire's failure to produce an original philosophy was, in a sense, counterbalanced by his deliberate cultivation of a philosophy of action; his 'common sense' crusade against superstition and prejudice and in favour of religious toleration was his single greatest contribution to the progress of Enlightenment. 'Rousseau writes for writing's sake', he declared in a letter of 1767, 'I write to act.'

It was therefore Voltaire's literary and rhetorical contributions to the Enlightenment which were truly unique. Interested neither in music (like Rousseau) nor in art (like Diderot), Voltaire was fundamentally a man of language. Through force of style, through skilful choice of literary genre, and through the accomplished manipulation of the book market, he found means of popularizing and promulgating ideas which until then had generally been clandestine. The range of his writing is immense, embracing virtually every genre. In verse, he wrote in every form - epic poetry, ode, satire and epistle, and even occasional and light verse; his drama, also written in verse, includes both comedies and tragedies (although the tragedies have not survived in the modern theatre, many live on in the opera, as, for example, Rossini's *Semiramide* and *Tancredi*).

It is above all the prose works with which modern readers are familiar, and again the writings cover a wide spectrum: histories, polemical satires, pamphlets of all types, dialogues, short fictions or *contes*, and letters both real and fictive. The conspicuous absentee from this list is the novel, a genre which, like the prose *drame*, Voltaire thought base and trivial. To understand the strength of his dislike for these 'new' genres, we need to remember that Voltaire was a product of the late seventeenth century, the moment of the Quarrel between Ancients and Moderns, and this literary debate continued to influence his aesthetic views all through his life. Controversial religious and political views were often expressed in the literary forms (classical tragedy, the verse satire) perfected in the seventeenth century; the 'conservatism' of these forms seems, to modern readers at least, to compromise the content, though this apparent traditionalism may in fact have helped Voltaire mask the originality of his enterprise: it is at least arguable that in a work such as *Zaire* (1732), the form of the classical tragedy made its ideas of religious toleration more palatable.

Yet this would also be a simplification, for notwithstanding his apparent literary conservatism, Voltaire was in fact a relentless reformer and experimenter with literary genres, innovative almost despite himself, particularly in the domain of prose. Although he never turned his back on verse drama and philosophical poetry, he experimented with different forms of historical writing and tried his hand at different styles of prose fiction. Above all, he seems to have discovered late in his career the satirical and polemical uses of the fragment, notably in his alphabetic works, the *Dictionnaire philosophique portatif* (1764), containing 73 articles in its first edition, and the *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie* (1770-1772). The latter work, whose first edition contained 423 articles in nine octavo volumes, is a vast and challenging compendium of his thought and ranks among Voltaire's unrecognized masterpieces.

He used something like 175 different pseudonyms in the course of his career.

Voltaire's ironic, fast-moving, deceptively simple style makes him one of the greatest stylists of the French language. All his life, Voltaire loved to act in his own plays, and this fondness for role-playing carried through into all his writings. He used

something like 175 different pseudonyms in the course of his career, and his writing is characterized by a proliferation of different personae and voices. The reader is constantly drawn into dialogue - by a footnote which contradicts the text, or by one voice in the text which argues against another. The use of the mask is so relentless and the presence of humour, irony, and satire so pervasive that the reader has finally no idea of where the 'real' Voltaire is. His autobiographical writings are few and entirely unrevealing: as the title of his *Commentaire historique sur les Œuvres de l'auteur de la Henriade* suggests, it is his writings alone which constitute their author's identity.

In fact, we rarely know with certainty what Voltaire truly thought or believed; what mattered to him was the impact of what he wrote. The great crusades of the 1760s taught him to appreciate the importance of public opinion, and in popularizing the clandestine ideas of the early part of the century he played the role of the journalist. He may have been old-fashioned in his nostalgia for the classicism of the previous century, but he was wholly of his day in his consummate understanding of the medium of publishing. He manipulated the book trade to achieve maximum publicity for his ideas, and he well understood the importance of what he called 'the portable'. In 1766, Voltaire wrote to d'Alembert: 'Twenty in-folio volumes will never cause a revolution; it's the little portable books at thirty *sous* which are to be feared.'

Voltaire was also modern in the way he invented himself by fashioning a public image out of his adopted name. As the patriarch of Ferney, he turned himself into an institution whose fame reached across Europe. As an engaged and militant intellectual, he stood at the beginning of a French tradition which looked forward to Emile Zola and to Jean-Paul Sartre, and in modern republican France his name stands as a cultural icon, a symbol of rationalism and the defence of tolerance. Voltaire was a man of paradoxes: the bourgeois who as *de Voltaire* gave himself aristocratic pretensions, but who as plain Voltaire later became a hero of the Revolution; the conservative in aesthetic matters who appeared as a radical in religious and political issues. He was, above all, the master ironist, who, perhaps more than any other writer, gave to the Enlightenment its characteristic and defining tone of voice.

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Voltaire: The Rascal Philosopher

Kindly watch this Video [2:10:58]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYABjV9ZO8>

Few enlightenment thinkers are as famous as the French writer Voltaire. Born into a modest though socially ambitious family, he found his talent for writing early and by his late teens was punching way above his

weight as a playwright and poet earning accolades and raising eyebrows for his witty use of satire to make not-so-subtle criticisms of church and state. Indeed, he would spend his entire adult life dodging the authorities, often writing under multiple pseudonyms and denying authorship of most of his scandalous books, for which there was no shortage of interest among the literate class of Paris, while the government burned his prolific output on a continuous basis in the public square. In his long and productive life he would write more than 2000 books and articles- including several massive encyclopaedic volumes. He would correspond with both monarchs and nobodies, on subjects as diverse as geology and free-speech; history and biology; mathematics and religious tolerance. His fortunes would take him from the Bastille and exile to the court of Frederick the Great, back to the Bastille and exile again. His very name became synonymous with both scandal and genius, and yet despite his herculean output, he nevertheless found time to advocate for the downtrodden and oppressed classes – often at substantial personal expense. He would ferociously denounce laws and customs he believed were unjust and savage his enemies in brutal polemical arguments, yet was incredibly generous to the point of being a sucker. He had an iron wit yet was an interminable hypochondriac. He was a Frenchman who loved the English way of life, always tearing at the fabric of his corrupt society. Perhaps more than any other individual of the time, his works challenged people to think deeply about the need to evolve our institutions and culture to be more humane, rational and accountable. If you want to know a bit more about this genius who stood at the crossroads between the old Europe and the New, then join us, as we dive into life and times of Voltaire, the Rascal philosopher.

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"Enter into the Royal Exchange of London, a place more respectable than many courts, in which deputies from all nations assemble for the advantage of mankind. There the Jew, the Mahometan, and the Christian bargain with one another as if they were of the same religion, and bestow the name of infidel on bankrupts only... Was there in London but one religion, despotism might be apprehended; if two only, they would seek to cut each other's throats; but as there are at least thirty, they live together in peace and happiness." <<< Voltaire

Chronology

Voltaire

- 1694: Birth of Voltaire, his given name is François-Marie Arouet.
- 1704: Voltaire enters the Jesuit school Louis-le-Grand in Paris.
- 1713: Voltaire sent to Holland as secretary to the French ambassador.
- 1715: Death of Louis XIV.
- 1717: Voltaire is imprisoned in the Bastille for 11 months.
- 1718: Voltaire's first theatrical success is a tragedy on the *Oedipus* theme.
- 1723: He publishes the first edition de *La Henriade*, an epic poem dealing with the 16th-century Wars of Religion in France and the coming to power of Henry IV.
- 1726: Beaten by order of the chevalier de Rohan, he is again imprisoned in the Bastille, and then exiled to England.
- 1728: Voltaire returns to France.
- 1731: Publication of the *History of Charles XII* (the Swedish monarch).
- 1732: Triumph of *Zaïre*, a tragedy set against the backdrop of the

Crusades.

1734: Publication of the *Philosophical Letters*. Under threat of arrest, Voltaire takes refuge at Cirey, in the Champagne region, at the home of his lover Mme du Châtelet.

1735-1739: In Cirey. Publication of *Elements of the philosophy of Newton*.

1740: Coronation of Frederick II, King of Prussia. Voltaire meets with Frederick II in Clèves.

1741: War of Austrian Succession.

1745: Louis XV wins the battle of Fontenoy and takes Mme de Pompadour as his mistress. Voltaire named Royal Historiographer.

1746: Election to the French Academy.

1747: Voltaire falls from favor at the court. Publication of the philosophical tale, *Zadig*.

1748: Frequent the court of Stanislas, father-in-law of Louis XV, in Lorraine. Peace Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.

1749: Death of Mme du Châtelet.

1750: Voltaire moves to Berlin to join the court of Frederick II of Prussia. Rousseau publishes his *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts*.

1751: Publication of volume I of Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*. Voltaire publishes *The Age of Louis XIV*.

1753: Voltaire breaks with Frederick II. Louis XV forbids him access to Paris; he stays temporarily in Alsace.

1753: Establishes residence at "Les Délices," outside Geneva. Rousseau publishes his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*.

1756: Voltaire collaborates on the *Encyclopédie*; d'Alembert (author of the article "Optimism") visits Voltaire at "Les Délices." Beginning of the Seven Years War.

1757: Disastrous defeat of the French army at Rossbach. Persecution of the philosophes: publication of the *Encyclopédie* is interrupted.

1758: Voltaire buys Ferney, a French château near the Swiss border.

1759: Publication of *Candide*.

1762: Beginning of the Calas Affair. --Catherine the Great seizes power in Russie. Rousseau publishes *The Social Contract* and *Emile*.

1763: End of the Seven Years' War: France loses Canada and possessions in the Caribbean. Voltaire publishes his *Treatise on Tolerance*.

1764: June: first edition of the *Portable Philosophical Dictionary* in Geneva.

1765: As a result of Voltaire's activism, Jean Calas is rehabilitated. Voltaire publishes an expanded edition of the *Philosophical Dictionary*. The final volumes of the *Encyclopédie* are allowed to appear.

1766: Accused of impiety, the chevalier de La Barre is beheaded. The *Philosophical Dictionary* is burned with his body.

1767: Publication of the philosophical tale, *Ingenuous*.

1768: *The Princess of Babylon*.

1769: New edition of *Philosophical Dictionary* under the title *The Alphabet of Reason*.

1770-1772: Publication of *Questions on the Encyclopédie*, in 9 volumes.



Quintessential

Quotable QUOTES

{<https://parade.com/living/voltaire-quotes>}

1. "Better is the enemy of good."
2. "I cannot imagine how the clockwork of the universe can exist without a clockmaker."
3. "Let us read, and let us dance; these two amusements will never do any harm to the world."

4. "Don't think money does everything or you are going to end up doing everything for money."
5. "[God](#) gave us the gift of [life](#); it is up to us to give ourselves the gift of living well."
6. "[Appreciation](#) is a wonderful thing. It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well."
7. "Prejudices are what fools use for reason."
8. "Anyone who has the power to make you believe absurdities has the power to make you commit injustices."
9. "Everything you say should be true, but not everything true should be said."
10. "To hold a pen is to be at war."
11. "Every man is guilty of all the good he did not do."
12. "I have wanted to kill myself a hundred times, but somehow I am still in love with life."
13. "The human brain is a complex organ with the wonderful power of enabling man to find reasons for continuing to believe whatever it is that he wants to believe."
14. "Life is a shipwreck, but we must not forget to sing in the lifeboats."
15. "Is there anyone so wise as to learn by the experience of others?"
16. "Paper money eventually returns to its intrinsic value—zero."
17. "Judge a man by his questions rather than by his answers."
18. "The most important decision you make is to be in a good mood."
19. "Common sense is not so common."
20. "No problem can withstand the assault of sustained thinking."
21. "The more I read, the more I acquire, the more certain I am that I know nothing."

22. "You have no control over the hand that life deals you, but how you play that hand is entirely up to you."

23. "Give me the [patience](#) for the small things of life, courage for the great trials of life. Help me to do my best each day and then go to sleep knowing God is awake."

24. "To succeed in the world it is not enough to be stupid—one must also be polite."

25. "[Optimism is the madness](#) of insisting that all is well when we are miserable."

26. "Cherish those who seek the truth but beware of those who find it."

27. "Faith consists in believing when it is beyond the power of reason to believe."

28. "I have never made but one prayer to God, a very short one: 'O Lord, make my enemies ridiculous.' And God granted it."

29. "Liberty of thought is the life of the soul."

30. "Doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is absurd."

31. "The comfort of the rich depends upon an abundant supply of the poor."

32. "My life is a struggle."

33. "The ear is the avenue to the heart."

34. "The more often a stupidity is repeated, the more it gets the appearance of wisdom."

35. "Present opportunities are not to be neglected; they rarely visit us twice."

36. "The secret of being a bore is to tell everything."

37. "Fear follows crime and is its punishment."

38. "Sensual pleasure passes and vanishes, but the [friendship](#) between us, the mutual [confidence](#), the delight of the heart, the enchantment of the soul, these things do not perish and can never be destroyed."

39. "Love truth, but pardon error."

40. "Dare to think for yourself."

41. "Wherever my travels may lead, paradise is where I am."

42. "We never live; we are always in the expectation of living."

43. "All the reasonings of men are not worth one sentiment of women."

44. "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him."

45. "It is one of the superstitions of the human mind to have imagined that virginity could be a virtue."

46. "Let us cultivate our garden."

47. "He must be very ignorant for he answers every question he is asked."

48. "What a heavy burden is a name that has become too famous."

49. "The darkness is at its deepest. Just before the sunrise."

50. "The biggest reward for a thing well done is to have done it."

<https://www.forbes.com/quotes/author/voltaire/>

<https://www.britannica.com/quotes/Voltaire>

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<https://collections.mfa.org/objects/642251>

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Memorials

The Crowning of Voltaire

<https://collections.mfa.org/objects/642251>



The poet, philosopher, and playwright François-Marie Arouet, known universally as Voltaire, was one of the most influential figures of the 18th century. He was a linchpin of the French Enlightenment, so it often comes as a surprise to learn that he spent much of his career in Switzerland, in exile from France. This print, Gaucher's most important, captures a key moment from Voltaire's triumphant return to Paris in the very last months of his life. Voltaire came back to the city in February 1778 to see the premiere of his last play, *Irène*. He fell ill during the voyage from Geneva and missed the premiere at the Comédie française on March 16, but recovered enough to attend a performance later in the month. Moreau le Jeune and Gaucher capture the moment when the cast ceremonially crown a bust of the playwright with a laurel wreath. The real Voltaire looks on from the loge at upper left, as the audience applauds. The philosopher stayed in Paris, but died a few months later.

The Heart of Voltaire

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/the-heart-of-voltaire-paris-france>



Voltaire in marble is resting atop his real, fleshy heart.

DESPITE A TUMULTUOUS RELATIONSHIP WITH city officials during his lifetime, Voltaire died a hero. Since his passing, the respected yet polarizing reputation of the real-life François-Marie Arouet, better known as Voltaire, has solidified into that of a legitimate national treasure.

When news of the provocative author's passing spread through [Paris](#) in 1778, tens of thousands mourned his passing in the streets. In a cruel twist of fate, Voltaire expired just one day after his long-awaited, triumphant return to Paris following one of his many periods of church and state-enforced exile from the city. [France's](#) officials saw that Voltaire would be treated with all due respect in death – by which we mean to say, the wit's best corporeal parts

were pulled out, allowing the highest-ranking party members and royals to divvy them up amongst themselves.

To get even more specific, Voltaire's brain and heart were boiled in alcohol to solidify them for all eternity. This, actually, was [common practice](#) at the time for someone of Voltaire's stature. These two most important organs were relegated to identical marble likenesses of the alternately beloved and reviled Enlightenment philosopher.

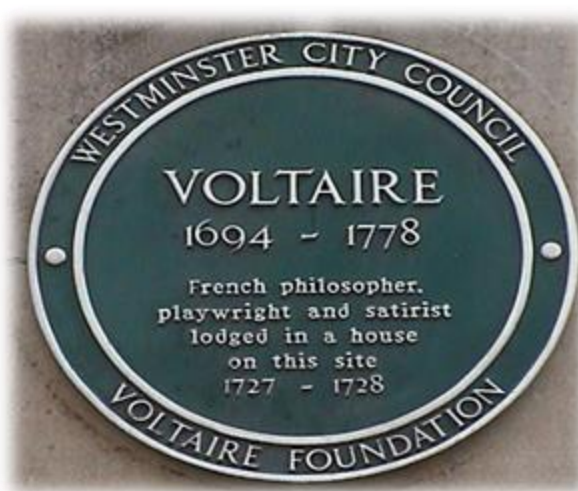
His heart ended up in the hands of the Marquis de Villette, who placed it in a metal box in a room emblazoned with the words, "His spirit is everywhere, his heart is here." After purchasing an estate at Ferney, Villette converted the heart-in-a-metal-box into a situation that involved a pyramid, a casket on a velvet cushion, and 40-some-odd portraits of Voltaire's favorite humans in life, gazing at his dead heart.

Only after the Marquis' son died in 1864, resulting in a legal battle with the French state, did Voltaire's heart end up in the hands of the government. Napoleon III saw that a wooden base was affixed to the Houdon's sculpture of the philosopher, whereupon the whole shebang was installed in France's nascent National Library. After a few decades spent languishing in a dusty back annal, Voltaire and his heart were installed in the library's Salon d'honneur in 1924.

To this day, visitors can make a pilgrimage to the National Library to visit the heart of one of France's most cherished thinkers in the stunning oak-paneled room over which he presides. The only time it has moved since the early 20th century was for a brief stint in 2010, at which point the statue of Voltaire was removed due to restoration efforts focusing on the Salon d'honneur. It is said that when moving the statue this last time, Voltaire began emitting a pungent odor. By all accounts this was attributed to the heart in its base "making its presence felt," and by the time the statue was returned to its home shortly thereafter, the plague of noxious smells had ended.

Voltaire Plaque

<https://www.londonremembers.com/memorials/voltaire>



The plaque was stolen some years ago. In 1994 (300th birthday) the Voltaire Foundation got it put back.

The Castle after Voltaire



After Voltaire's death, the château and some of its furnishings were sold by his niece, Madame Denis. The **Marquis de Villette**, who owned the property from 1778 to 1785, dismantled it. He staged the château to orchestrate **the posthumous cult of the great man**, making the Château de Ferney the **first memorial site dedicated to a writer in France**.

A national monument



In 1958, Voltaire's château was listed as a national monument. **The descendants of the Lambert family sold the château to the French state in 1999.** Today, the ensemble

comprises the château (largely preserved in its original exterior layout, but extensively altered inside), the park, whose landscape composition dates back to the 19th century, the janitor's pavilion dating from 1885, the orangery built in 1901 and the chapel, Ferney's former parish church until 1826.

The "Innkeeper of Europe"



LA MAISON DE VOLTAIRE A FERNEY
Casa de Voltaire a Ferney

As a good chatelaine, **Madame Denis** takes care of furnishings and receptions. Voltaire plants trees, tends his vegetable garden, finds inspiration under the branches of his charms...

Life was gentle at the château, and very active in the village, which he transformed considerably: sanitation, paved streets, a fountain, a school and craftsmen's houses formed the heart of the village. Manufacturers set up shop: watchmaking, earthenware, tanning, pottery, silkworm breeding.

Ferney became a major commercial and intellectual center at the heart of the European Enlightenment.

Visitors of all kinds came to Ferney from all over Europe, drawn by the glory of the master of the house, now nicknamed the **"Innkeeper of Europe"**: lords, philosopher friends, women of letters and even artists in residence, housed on the second floor of the château.



Some of his selected BOOKS

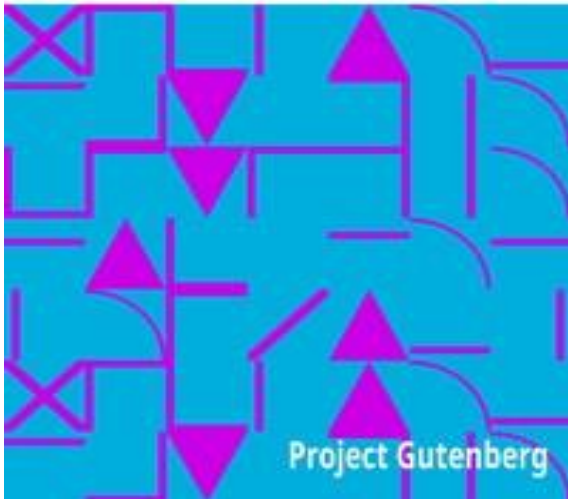
<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/913>



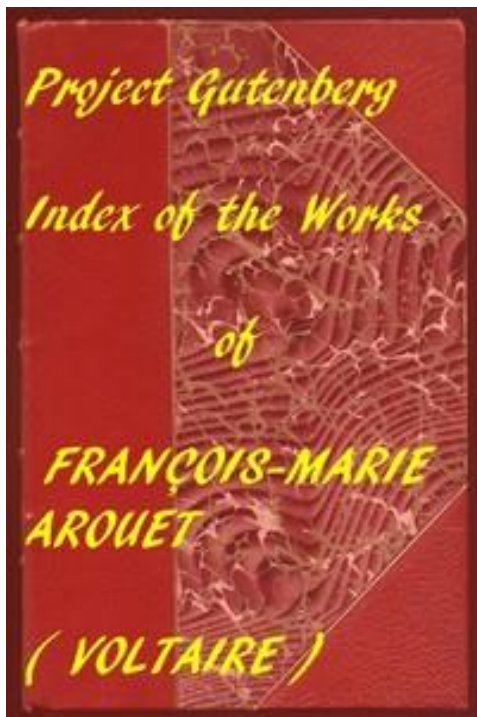
"Candide" by Voltaire is a satirical novel written in the mid-18th century. This work follows the misadventures of its main character, Candide, who is born into a privileged life but is soon expelled from his idyllic home and thrust into a world filled with absurdity, violence, and philosophical challenges. The story critiques the optimistic philosophy of the time, particularly through Candide's interactions with various characters and the dire circumstances he encounters. The opening of "Candide" sets the stage with a glimpse into the life of the titular character, who grows up in the castle of Baron Thunder-ten-Tronckh, where he is taught by the optimistic philosopher Pangloss. Candide experiences a moment of youthful passion with Cunegonde, the Baron's daughter, but when discovered, he is brutally expelled from the castle. His naive belief that he lives in "the best of all possible worlds" is quickly challenged as he is thrust into a harsh reality marked by war and suffering. The beginning establishes the central themes of philosophy, love, and the inherent absurdity of life that will continue to develop throughout the novel. (This is an automatically generated summary.)

Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary

Voltaire



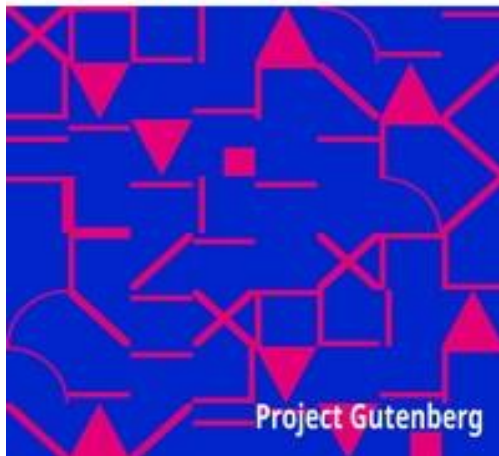
"Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary" by Voltaire is a philosophical treatise written in the late 18th century. This work represents a collection of reflections on various topics, touching on moral, ethical, and intellectual considerations relevant to both the individual and society. It seeks to challenge established norms and provoke thought, inviting readers to reflect on a multitude of subjects from authority and reason to the nature of animals and love. At the start of the book, the preface sets the stage by arguing that philosophy is fundamentally meant for the enlightened few, not the masses, suggesting a separation between the philosophical elite and the general populace. The author emphasizes the importance of personal reflection and the need for critical thinking in engaging with philosophical ideas. Following the preface, a listing of topics reveals the range of themes explored in the dictionary, each entry addressing significant philosophical queries that challenge social mores and the foundations of understanding in a rapidly evolving world. (This is an automatically generated summary.)



"Index of the PG Works of Voltaire in English" by Voltaire is a comprehensive compilation of works written during the 18th century, reflecting the Enlightenment period. This book is a bibliographic index that organizes and lists Voltaire's major writings available in English, serving as a resource for readers interested in his contributions to literature, philosophy, and social criticism. The likely topic of the book centers around the exploration of Voltaire's diverse themes, his critical views on society, and the variety of literary forms he embraced. The index includes a range of Voltaire's works, such as essays, philosophical treatises, novels, and letters. Notable entries include "Candide," a satirical critique on optimism; "Zadig," which explores fate and chance; and "Micromegas," a science fiction narrative that touches on perspectives beyond Earth. Each entry in the index highlights different aspects of Voltaire's thoughts, from his reflections on religion and morality to critiques of politics and social norms. Overall, this compilation serves as an invaluable tool for scholars and general readers alike, providing insights into Voltaire's vast intellectual legacy. (This is an automatically generated summary.)

Voltaire's Romances, Complete in One
Volume

Voltaire

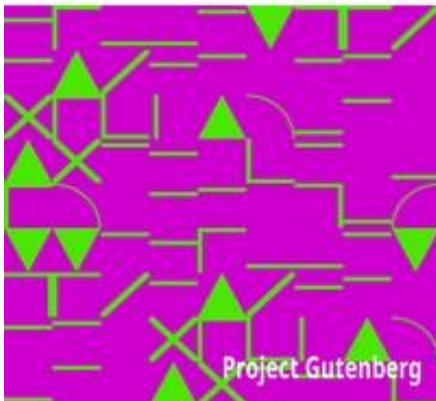


"Voltaire's Romances, Complete in One Volume" by Voltaire is a collection of satirical romances written in the late 18th century. The text showcases Voltaire's sharp wit and criticism of societal issues and religious dogma while presenting whimsical tales that often blend humor with profound moral lessons. The collection features various characters across its stories, including fantastical beings like a white bull and a serpent, as well as historical figures that provide a rich tapestry of narratives. The opening of the volume introduces readers to the melancholy Princess Amasidia, who longs for her missing lover, an elusive figure entangled in royal betrayal and magic. As she mourns, she encounters an extraordinary white bull, whom she wishes to possess, but the presence of an old woman and a serpent complicates her desires. The wise Mambres, a magician, offers sage advice amidst these curious happenings, setting the stage for a playful yet thoughtful exploration of themes like love, identity, and the absurdities of life in an enchanting narrative filled with allegorical depth.

(This is an automatically generated summary.)

Correspondance de Voltaire avec le roi de Prusse

Voltaire and King of Prussia Frederick II



"Correspondence de Voltaire avec le roi de Prusse" by Voltaire and Frederick II is a historical correspondence written in the late 19th century. This collection encompasses over four decades of letters exchanged between the renowned Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire and Frederick II, the king of Prussia. The dialogues explore diverse subjects such as philosophy, politics, and the arts, revealing the unique intellectual rapport between the two influential figures of their time. At the start of the correspondence, we see Frederick, still a prince, reaching out to Voltaire with admiration for his literary genius. The letters highlight Frederick's desire to cultivate philosophy and the arts within his reign, expressing a shared commitment to Enlightenment ideas. Voltaire's responses are filled with flattery and philosophical musings, as he encourages Frederick's aspirations for humane leadership. The opening sets the stage for a complex relationship, characterized by mutual respect, philosophical discussions, and the challenges posed by royal duties, thereby inviting readers to explore how their correspondence evolves over the years. (This is an automatically generated summary.)



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French Revolution





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ISBN 978-81-981806-0-5



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